



September 24, 2004

## Two sentenced in smuggling of “vinylized” heroin

A federal judge has sentenced two men to 70 months in federal prison for their roles in smuggling into Rhode Island about two kilograms of heroin that had been chemically mixed into a vinyl-like slab and disguised as part of a suitcase. Federal agents arrested the pair – **Freddy Alonso Osorio**, 45, of Pawtucket, and **Jaime Restrepo-Mejia**, 34, of Central Falls – in February as they accepted delivery of the suitcase at a Pawtucket gas station.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentences, which U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith imposed during separate proceedings yesterday in U.S. District Court, Providence.

Both defendants pleaded guilty last spring to conspiracy and possessing with intent to distribute more than a kilogram of heroin. At the hearings at which they pleaded guilty, Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary E. Rogers said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that Osorio and Restrepo-Mejia engaged in a plot to receive the vinylized heroin, which had been flown from Colombia to Miami by a smuggler and then transported to Pawtucket.

On February 13, Osorio and Restrepo-Mejia met the smuggler at a gas station off I-95 in Pawtucket. With agents monitoring the transaction, Osorio and Restrepo-Mejia told the smuggler that they wanted the suitcase he had but not its contents. When they dumped the

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contents of the suitcase into the backseat of the car in which the smuggler had arrived, agents moved in and arrested the pair and the smuggler

A five-kilogram slab of vinyl-like substance was sealed into a wall of the suitcase. DEA analysts determined that about 37% of the slab was heroin weighing about 1.9 kilograms. Heroin in this form can be chemically reconverted into a form suitable for street sales.



ICE agents display a vinyl-like slab of heroin that had been disguised as part of a suitcase. (US Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement)

At a hearing in February, Assistant U.S. Attorney Rogers presented evidence that, on February 12, the day before the delivery in Pawtucket, the smuggler carried the suitcase off a plane that had just landed at Miami International Airport from Colombia. A Customs inspector became suspicious about the suitcase, and agents determined that a gray slab on one inside wall of the suitcase tested positive for heroin.

Osorio, of 78 Whirlaway Place, Pawtucket, and Restrepo-Mejia, of Broad Street, Central Falls, have been detained at the Wyatt Federal Detention Center, Central Falls, since their arrest in February.

**The Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** and the **Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Rogers prosecuted it for the government.